

MINUTES OF THE RETREAT
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF BURLINGTON
February 13, 2006

A City Council retreat was held at the Courtyard by Marriott, 3141 Wilson Drive, Burlington, NC 27215 on February 13, 2006, at 8:30 a.m.

Councilmembers present: Mayor Ross, Councilmembers Jones, Huffman, Starling and Wall

Councilmembers absent: None

Harold Owen, City Manager, present

Robert M. Ward, City Attorney, present

Jondeen D. Terry, City Clerk, present

Other Staff Present: Administrative Services/Revenue Collections Director Frank Hope, Development/Technical Services Director Jim Lauritsen, Director of Public Works/Operations Gary Hicks, Finance/Risk Management Director Linda Hollifield, Planning/Economic Development Director Bob Harkrader, Police Chief Mike Gauldin, Fire Chief Jay Smith, Utilities Director Steve Shoaf, Director of Recreation and Parks Tony Laws, Information Technologies Director Rodger Burden, Human Resources Director Aaron Noble, Public Information Director Jennifer Smith, Elon University Intern Kelly McGuirk, Accounting/Treasury Manager Peggy Reece, Superintendent of Recreation Programming Lisa Wolff, Mike Nunn and Russ Smith

Media Present: James Moffat, Times-News; Tomas Murawski, Alamance News

Others present for certain portions of the retreat: Mike Mills, North Carolina Department of Transportation; Dr. Betty Morgan, Elon University

City Manager Owen began the meeting by thanking Ms. Carol Plew, Burlington Courtyard, for providing the facility. He also acknowledged the work of department heads, Jennifer Smith and Kelly McGuirk.

REVIEW OF 2004 RETREAT

The first segment of the retreat included an update on items discussed at the February 2004 retreat. Mr. Burden gave an update on the new Eden software system and also pointed out the City of Burlington Website had 7,482,644 hits in 2005.

Mr. Hicks and Chief Gauldin gave an update on the Pet Adoption Center stating that the Center opened in April 2004 and that the adoption rate was up 135% in 2005.

Mr. Lauritsen gave an update on water and sewer projects and stated that a second waterline had been installed from the Mackintosh Plant. He pointed out that the City was providing a large amount of water each day to Greensboro.

Mr. Shoaf said that another generator had been installed that would operate the entire treatment plant in case of an ice storm, etc.

Mr. Hope reported that the Raftelis and Associates water and sewer rate study was completed in the spring of 2004 and had been used in budget preparation for the last two years and was a valuable tool for recommending water and sewer rates. Mr. Owen said that staff was considering switching from bimonthly to monthly utility billing.

CITY SERVICES REVIEW

Mr. Owen presented a departmental summary of services provided.

REVIEW OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES AND GROWTH OF TAX BASE

Ms. Hollifield gave an assessment of revenue sources and general fund expenditures.

Mr. Hope reported on water and sewer fund revenues and expenditures. He explained that there had been very little growth of the tax base and no growth in personal property taxes. He showed pictures of new residential developments but explained there was a time lag before the City earned tax revenues.

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN BURLINGTON AND STREETSCAPES PLAN

There was a discussion concerning the Burlington Downtown Corporation, and it was pointed out that the main purpose of the Downtown Corporation was revitalization and promotion of downtown. The organization has a 13-member board and two-person staff, and property owners in the special downtown tax district pay an additional 16-cent tax. The current renewal would expire in June 2008. There were questions concerning the need to continue the corporation or the need to redirect the purpose of the organization to economic development or streetscaping.

Upon motion by Councilmember Starling, seconded by Councilmember Wall, it was resolved unanimously to allow Councilmember Jones to abstain from voting because his law firm was located in the Service District.

Upon motion by Councilmember Starling, seconded by Councilmember Huffman, it was resolved unanimously to set a date of public hearing for March 7, 2006, to consider abolition of the Downtown Municipal Service District. Councilmember Jones abstained from voting.

Mr. Hicks discussed streetscaping in the downtown area.

LUNCH

CITY SERVICES SURVEY

Dr. Betty Morgan, Elon University, and Jennifer Smith gave details concerning the upcoming City Services Survey. The survey will be distributed to 25,000 citizens in English and Spanish and will go out February 27 and be returned to the City by March 9, 2006. The survey will be distributed through the Times-News, City of Burlington's website, libraries, elementary schools and City facilities. Dr. Morgan stressed the credibility of Elon's polling facility. She stated a three to five percent return on the survey was expected.

STREET COLLECTOR PLAN

Mr. Nunn reviewed collector streets stating that they provide a "feeder" system to major thoroughfares. He explained that they collect traffic from all types of uses and connect the main street networks, and the collector streets would help disperse new traffic related to growth and development. He reviewed the Western Loop collector street plan and other proposed collector streets. Mr. Harkrader stated that staff needed a policy instrument in place.

Mr. Nunn also discussed the need for a feasibility study for a Rural Retreat bridge. He pointed out that it would be a lengthy process requiring state and federal approval plus environmental reviews.

Mr. Mills informed the group that NCDOT was strapped for cash for the next three years. He explained that NCDOT maintained 78,000 miles of roads in North Carolina and that there was a \$35 million shortfall.

It was decided that the street collector plan would be discussed at a work session or a public hearing.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES FOR THE CITY

Mr. Smith gave a development review of residential and non-residential trends, pointed out growth "hot spots" and reviewed the Western Loop Land Use Plan. He also talked about the future industrial reserve and reviewed recent annexations.

Mr. Owen stated that with the development would come the need for police/fire substations, additional sanitation routes and more water and sewer lines.

City Councilmembers held a discussion about land use.

Jondeen D. Terry
City Clerk